Chapter 7

Past Influences, Current Issues, Future Research Directions

Ruth Clifford Engs

Over the last few decades alcohol consumption patterns have been changing in many cultures.[1] For instance, Italian youth are consuming more beer and spirits and Scandinavians are consuming more wine. Traditional drinking patterns are becoming less defined as the world increasingly becomes a "global village." Risky youthful drinking, in particular, has led to concern about potential emerging problems among young people in many countries. However, the traditional norms within a culture still have a powerful influence upon the way a nation perceives alcohol and drinking and also the research supported by its official bodies. For instance, most alcohol and drinking research is undertaken in Northern European cultures or their former colonies. In these cultures, studies, conferences, and professional journals focus heavily on negative aspects of drinking such as alcoholism, alcohol abuse, drunk driving, youthful drinking, and health problems associated with risky drinking. Few studies, however, have investigated how young people learn to drink in a sensible way, how alcohol enhances a meal, or factors that encourage moderate drinking practices within a

[1.] Changes in the second half of the 20th century are recorded in Hupkens, Knibbe, and Drop (1992) and in various statistical yearbooks published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (1984, 1991). A few publications discuss drinking patterns and attitudes towards alcohol in cultures outside Western Europe and its former colonies including Bonavia (1980), Chafetz (1964), Hanson (1996), and Heok (1990). See also the many works by Heath, and especially his *International Handbook on Alcohol and Culture* (1995), where numerous authors discuss patterns in specific cultures.

culture. Other cultures of the world have different opinions, practices, and norms concerning drinking. Asian cultures differ from African cultures, which in turn differ from some Middle Eastern Islamic cultures with norms of complete abstinence. Although it would be of interest to compare youth in many cultures, owing to space limitations this chapter will focus on Western European cultures and their youth.

The chapter highlights the deep entrenchment of cultural differences that have their origins in antiquity. Without an understanding of these differences, there is a tendency to restrict research to limited topics or to repeat or implement, policies that have little effect in reducing problematic alcohol consumption. The chapter will briefly touch upon the origins of Western culture's drinking norms and the association of the past with present attitudes and behaviors in regard to drinking, including religious differences, health reform, and temperance cycles, and transmission of cultural values through the family and other vehicles. In doing so, it identifies emerging directions for research, especially involving youth issues.

ORIGINS OF DRINKING NORMS, CULTURAL CLASHES, AND TEMPERANCE CYCLES

Attitudes and Beverage Preference: Patterns from Ancient Barbarians and Romans

Is the drinking cup half empty or half full? Differences in learning about drinking, and even research, depend upon how a society perceives this cup. Western European cultures and their former colonies in North America, Australasia, and South Africa span the range. The most restrictive attitudes are found in the "Barbarian," "Northern," or "Nordic" cultures such as Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Iceland in the northern region of Europe. These cultures tend to be preoccupied with "alcohol problems" and are ambivalent about drinking. The cup is half empty, and they often struggle to pour the rest out. These drinking cultures primarily drink grain-based beverages (ale, beer, spirits), often without food. They have a low per capita consumption, are predominately Protestant, do not have viticulture, and were not under the influence of the Roman expansion and urbanization process in antiquity. Episodic "feast drinking" to intoxication is common among males and drunkenness in specific situations is acceptable. Many of these Northern cultures tend to have periodic temperance movements where strict legislation to regulate alcohol consumption is implemented in an effort to eliminate perceived drinking problems.[2]

2. A number of works have discussed the different attitudes and practices concerning drinking within Western cultures, possible origins of these attitudes and practices, the association of these norms with religion, and the continuation of patterns among colonies spawned by the European cultures. (See Austin (1985), Engs (1995; 1999; 2000), Heath (1984; 2000). Levine (1983), Wiseman (1997). and most of the chapters in Pittman and Snyder (1962). See also the special issue of *Addiction Research* (1995; 2 (3» edited by Engs, Heath, and Room.)

In contrast, "Romanized," "Southern European," or "Mediterranean" cultures and their descendants in South America and other areas of the world do not have as great concerns about alcohol consumption. They merrily fill the drinking cup to enhance the quality of their meal and the pleasure of good company. Wme is considered part of the diet, and has been since antiquity. They frown upon drunkenness, and see few problems related to drinking even though their per capita consumption of alcohol, and liver cirrhosis rates, are among the highest in the world. They have few alcohol control policies, tend to be Roman Catholic cultures, have a climate that supports viticulture, and for generations had all been Roman provinces. These cultures include southern France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece.[3]

"Blended cultures" found in midcentral Western Europe, and their former colonies in North America, Australasia, and South Africa, consume both wine and grain-based beverages, both with and without meals, and tend to frown on drunkenness. Northern-blended drinking cultures are found in the United Kingdom and its former colonies. Like Nordic cultures, they have concerns about drinking. Continental-blended cultures have more Mediterranean attitudes. In Western Europe, most blended cultures were Roman provinces in antiquity. During the disruption of the early Middle Ages, they retained the Roman urban customs of daily wine drinking and viticulture but also incorporated the grain based drinking preferences of the Germanic invaders and settlers into their cultures. Dominant religious beliefs include both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Continental-blended cultures include much of Austria and Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, central and northern France, and Switzerland [4]

Eastern European drinking cultures, including Poland and Russia, have tended since antiquity to consume grain-based beverages. Spirits, in particular, after the introduction of distillation, became popular as they did in many Nordic cultures. These Eastern European cultures were not Roman provinces, did not have viticulture, and are either Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox countries. They have episodic feast drinking patterns and the aim of drinking is usually to get drunk. These cultures have had some brief but unsuccessful experimentation with rationing to cut down consumption (Levine, 1992; Tyrrell, 1979; Wald, Moskalewicz, & Morawski, 1990).

Several works focus upon the more Northern drinking cultures, including Bales (1962), Blane (1977), Blocker (1989), Gusfield (1986), and Rorabaugh (1979). Ahlstrom-Laakso (1976), Eriksen (1990), and MiikeHi (1986) focus on the Nordic region. Levine (1984, 1992), in particular, discusses the exclusivity of temperance cycles and alcohol control policies to English or Nordic-speaking Protestant countries.

3 See previous footnote and Davies (1984). For discussion of Italian patterns, see, in particular, Lolli, Serianni, and Golder (1958) and Cottino (1995).

4 Although Scotland is included with the rest of the United Kingdom, it has different drinking patterns from England and Wales. In antiquity, Scotland was not Romanized and did not have viticulture as found in southern England. In more recent times there were profound political struggles between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Scotland that may have had an influence on drinking patterns. The Republic of Ireland, in the same geographic region, was not Romanized, did not have viticulture, is Roman Catholic, and retains more Northern patterns (Engs, 1995, 1999).

The Protestant Temperance Connection

During the Reformation, Protestantism took root in the Northern cultures. Levine (1992) notes that "in Western societies, only Nordic and English-speaking cultures developed large, ongoing, extremely popular temperance movements in the nineteenth century and the first third or so of the twentieth century" (p. 17). He also observes that temperance-antialcohol-cultures have been, and still are, "Protestant" societies. Today, rigid alcohol control policies, and, in particular, policies to control youthful drinking, are primarily found in these Northern Protestant cultures and their former colonies. Protestants within these cultures, also tend to consume less alcohol compared to Roman Catholics. Heavier drinking has also been found among Irish Roman Catholic adults living in Western Scotland, and Roman Catholic youth in Australia, Canada, Scotland, and the U.S. (Engs, 1980; Engs, Diebold, & Hanson, 1996; Engs, Hanson, Glicksman, & Smythe, 1990; Engs & Mullen, 1999; Mullen, Williams, & Hunt,1996).

Protestantism is not merely a set of theological beliefs. It is a social psychology system with a focus on self-restraint and self-regulation. Drunkenness and episodic drinking patterns leading to mayhem, vomiting, and brutality are perceived as "out of control" behaviors. By extension, temperance movements, and, in particular, abstinence movements, which reached their greatest influence in the U.S., were the middle-class Protestant establishment's effort to force self-restraint upon groups that were perceived as being out of control, and to impose control on certain segments of the society.[5] In many Western countries today, with either traditional Northern, blended, or Southern European attitudes, the drunken "barbarian" behavior is primarily found among youth consuming spirits or even beer, and not the traditional alcoholic beverages consumed with meals and within a family context (Donato et al., 1995; Engs, 1999,2000; Geertz 1973; Levine, 1983, 1992).

Wide-scale temperance movements and antialcohol sentiments have not been, and generally are not, found in Southern European Catholic countries, although this benign attitude towards alcohol may be beginning to change in regard to young people in, for example, Italy (Donato et al,1995). In the largely

5 Anglo-American Protestant revivalists were particularly interested in temperance and spawned wide-scale temperance and/or prohibition movements. Missionaries from these revivalist religious groups successfully evangelized several countries, such as Sweden. which in turn developed a large temperance movement early in the twentieth movements. but not to the extent found in the U.S. and the United Kingdom. Iceland and Finland also developed temperance movements and instituted some prohibition efforts during this era. There was also some temperance interest among Protestants in Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Germany (Asmundsson. 1995; Levine, 1992). However, it did not develop into a national movement which Eriksen (1990) argues was likely to have been due, particularly in Denmark, to pietistic Lutheranism. Engs (1999, 2000) discusses the hostility of American Protestants towards Irish Catholic immigrants and the use of prohibition measures as a method of control over this group.

spirits-drinking Eastern Orthodox countries, such as Russia and Poland, sporadic antidrink campaigns have been launched but have only been short-lived (Wald et al., 1990). A similar history of sporadic, short-lived anti-alcohol campaigns has also been found in Ireland (Levine, 1992; Tyrrell, 1979).

Protestant "Awakenings," "Clean Living" Cycles, and the Control of Youthful Drunks

Beginning in the sixteenth century, immigrants to the Americas, Australasia, and other colonies took their drinking cultures with them. Successive waves of immigrants from different regions of Europe set the stage for cultural clashes in regard to attitudes and behaviors concerning alcohol consumption, especially in North America.6 One factor influencing temperance cycles and concerns about drunkenness, particularly in the U.S., is thought to be a clash of values between the dominant Protestant Anglo-Saxon blended drinking culture and Roman Catholic groups with different drinking norms. Temperance cycles have generally emerged with Protestant religious "awakenings" (Billington, 1974; Engs, 1999, 2000; Fogel, 1995; McLoughlin, 1978; Wilson, 1980).

Youthful Irish immigrants exhibited drunken behaviors resulting in urban riots and perceived health and social problems in the 1840s. A reason for the passage of prohibition laws in 13 eastern states in the U.S. and two Canadian provinces during the 1850s was to control these "dangerous" lower class Catholic "infidels" who were increasingly becoming involved in the liquor business (Billington, 1974; Blocker, 1989; Engs, 2000; Gienapp, 1987; Rosenberg, 1987; Tyrrell, 1979).

A factor in the American Prohibition experiment of the 1920s, was to gain control over heavy-drinking Eastern Europeans who habituated "saloons" and daily wine-drinking Italians who were wresting political control from "old-stock" Protestants. Other factors having an impact on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century movements included rapid industrialization, which called for sober laborers, and a reaction to unprecedented per capita consumption precipitated by rapid socioeconomic changes and stress in the early and late nineteenth century (Blocker, 1989; Engs, 2000; Pittman & Snyder, 1962; Timberlake, 1963).7

6 Brewing and distilling came with the British and Northern European immigrants into North America, Australasia, and South Africa. Viticulture followed the Spanish conquerors, monks, and colonists as they migrated to Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, and Chile. See, in particular. the following authors for further information concerning the dispersion of drinking cultures to the colonies: Gusfield (1963), Heath (1990), Timberlake (1963), Wiseman (1997).

7 For details of theories that discuss the etiology of temperance movements, Protestant "awakenings," control of immigrant and youthful behavior, need for sober workers, and the elimination of perceived problems such as saloons, see, in particular: Billington (1974), Blocker (1989), Engs (1992, 1999, 2000), Fogel (1995). Gusfield (1963), Hofstadter (1968). Musto (1996). Rorabaugh (1979), and Rumbarger (1989).

Temperance movements come in cycles of approximately 80 years in the U.S.[8] Because these movements are cyclical and have different phases, the phase of the cycle will determine what research programs will be allowed, particularly for youth. For example, because of current laws and attitudes, it would be impossible in the U.S. today to conduct a study with teenagers that examined the effect of beer, wine, and spirit-tasting classes in the public schools on drinking patterns. In the U.S., temperance cycles are part of a generalized "clean living movement" where "opposition towards alcohol, tobacco, drugs, sexual-related behaviors, and advocacy for exercise, pure water, vegetarian diets, and the prevention and elimination of other health, social, and environmental problems are common" (Engs, 1997, p. 223).

Each cycle has different phases within the overall ebb and flow of the movement. Each phase lasts about a generation. The phases in a cycle, for alcohol in particular, include: *moral suasion*, *coercion*, *backlash*, and *complacency* (Engs, 2000). In the first phase public efforts are deployed to eliminate perceived problems through moral suasion (education) campaigns. When the problem is not immediately eradicated, alcohol is then seen as *the* problem, and the substance becomes "demonized" (considered evil). Abstinence and prohibition measures are instituted as public policy. The backlash phase begins when a large part of the population, in particular youth, ignores the restrictive policies and continues to consume alcohol illegally in underground situations that precipitate negative alcohol-related behaviors. Because the laws are not working, they begin to be officially ignored, changed, or repealed. This then leads to a complacency stage. As problems begin to arise again, the cycle begins again (Blocker, 1989; Engs, 1997; Musto, 1996). A key to learning about drinking, and to research concerning youthful drinking, particularly in the U.S., is the awareness that temperance movements are cyclical. During the latter phases of the cycle, which the U.S. may now be entering, creative research on learning about drinking may be more easy to accomplish.

Emerging Research Questions I

- Does religiosity have an effect on youthful drinking patterns?
- What role can religion play in promoting sensible drinking among youth?
- In countries that have large immigrant populations what are the drinking patterns of immigrant youth compared to native-born youth?

8 For more information on temperance cycles. see Blocker (1989), Engs (2000), Heath (1989), Musto (1996). Pittman (1980), Room (1987, 1989), and Wagner (1987). Although Blocker has identified five movements, most other authors have collapsed these into three broad movements over the past 200 years with a cycle of about 80 years in the U.S. These three movements have tended to emerge shortly before peaks in per capita consumption of alcohol, which were in 1830. 1910, and 1980 (Rorabaugh, 1979).

- Why do Roman Catholic youth in Protestant cultures tend to consume more alcohol than Protestant youth in those cultures?
- What are the drinking patterns of Protestant youth in Catholic cultures?

ACQUISITION OF DRINKING NORMS AND YOUTHFUL DRINKING PATTERNS

Transmission of Family Drinking Values

Societies' drinking norms are transmitted through the family, as outlined in more detail in other chapters and particularly by Sanchez-Sosa and Poldrugo (see Chapter 3). Drinking in Southern and in many blended and Northern drinking cultures first takes place in the home. In Italy, the classic Southern culture, "families are still the central socialization agency all the way through from urban areas to the countryside, and the first contact with alcoholic beverages can take place between ages 5 and 14" (Forni, 1997, p. 66).

Likewise, in Northern-Blended cultures, the majority of young people are introduced to alcohol within the family. However, most drinking tends to occur with peers. In the United Kingdom youth first begin to taste alcohol between the ages of 10-12 (Bagnall, 1991). Although the legal drinking age there is 18 years, it is "widely flouted" and there appears to be a general social and cultural acceptance of adolescent alcohol use. Teenage drinking is viewed as a "normative developmental transition" (Foxcroft, Lowe, & May, 1994, p. 64). In the U.S., the legal purchase age is 21. However, 50% of youth have tried alcohol by the age of 14 (Johnson, 1993). One study showed that 65% of adolescents indicated that their first use took place in the context of a family gathering (LaBouvie, Bates, & Pandina, 1997). In Australia, 43% of 13-year-olds and 93% of l8-year-olds reported that they had used alcohol. Younger students tended to drink at home. However, there was peer pressure to drink among younger students outside the home (Wilks, 1992a, 1992b).

Peer influence on drinking outside the home leads to two types of drinking patterns among youth in some cultures. In Italy, although traditional patterns of moderate wine drinking with meals are found among youth, peer-influenced behaviors are more likely to lead to drunkenness. Donato et al. (1995) suggest that two

> distinct drinking patterns [are] found among Italian adolescents: on the one hand, the daily drinking of moderate wine with meals, together with parents, which [is] more common among males than females, as in other 'Latin' countries; and on the other hand, the occasional intake of alcoholic beverages in excess, especially beer and spirits, out of the family but together with peers (p. 59).

Forni (1997) also found these two patterns in another study of Italian youth. These and other researchers have concluded that peer-related drinking is likely

to be due to the adolescent development phase of striving for independence apart from their parents, a symbol of adulthood, and a rite of passage. In addition, most young people mature out of heavier uses of alcohol (LaBouvie et aI., 1997; Wilks, 1992b).

Current Youthful Drinking Patterns Outside the Home

In many Western cultures today the drunken Northern, "barbarian," or "binge" drinking behavior is primarily found among youth consuming spirits or beer with peers outside family settings. Drinking within the family is still associated with more moderate consumption. For example, in a sample of over 9,000 Italian youth, Donato et al. (1995) found that the "frequency of beer drinking and especially the quantity of spirits consumed showed the strongest association with frequency of drunkenness" (p. 63). In this study, twice as many males in grade 13 who consumed five or more drinks of spirits per month reported being intoxicated at least two times or more during the previous year compared to those who were daily wine drinkers.

On the whole, adolescents from Northern and Northern-blended cultures are more likely to report becoming drunk than those in Southern drinking cultures. For example, in the United Kingdom young adults aged between 16 and 24 consume the highest amount of alcohol. After 24 years of age there is a decline in alcohol use. A higher percentage of men (38%) exceeded their "sensible limit" than women (18%); sensible or safe consumption is defined as 21 units or drinks for men and 14 units or drinks for women per week.[9] In Scotland, alcohol is the most commonly used recreational substance, 93% of men and 84% of women consuming alcohol at least occasionally. Scottish men were found to consumed 16.9 drinks per week compared to 4.6 for women (Thomas, Goddard, Hickman, & Hunter, 1993). A difference in drinking patterns between Scottish and English/Welsh adolescents has been repeatedly found. A greater tendency for Scottish teenagers to drink to intoxication is thought to reflect cultural differences surrounding the use of alcohol (Marsh, Dobbs, & White, 1986). In the Northern Scandinavian cultures young adults are considerably more permissive of both drinking and intoxication than are older respondents (Makela, 1986).

A 1993/1994 World Health Organization study (Gabhainn & François, 2000) of youth in Europe and North America found that students in Northern and Northern-blended cultures were more likely to report perceived drunkenness on two or more occasions by the age of 15. This included 31 % of youth in the U.S., 40% in Sweden, and 42% in Austria. A high percentage of students in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales also reported this behavior. This was in contrast to France, Greece, Portugal, and Switzerland. It appears

9 See, for example, Engs & AIdo-Benson (1995), Garg, Wagener, & Mandans (1993), and Thomas et al. (1993) for information on safe drinking limits in terms of health.

that even among youth. The ancient patterns of more moderation are still found in the Southern drinking cultures.

Beer appears to be the most popular beverage for youth in most Western cultures, followed by spirits and wine. However, French students report higher frequencies of wine consumption. In Wales, Denmark, England, and Greece, over 40% of 15-year-old boys consumed beer on a weekly basis (Gabhainn & François, 2000). Beer has consistently been found to be the most popular beverage in numerous studies of university students in North America, Europe, and Australia.

Drinking patterns among university students show a wide variation. However, on the whole, the majority of students consume within the limit for sensible drinking in the Northern-blended drinking cultures. For example, a study comparing 1,687 U.S. American to 4,911 Canadian students attending universities in states and provinces surrounding the Great Lakes found that U.S. students consumed more drinks per week (14.2) than did their Canadian counterparts (12.3). However, both groups were within sensible limits (Engs et al., 1990).

In the United Kingdom most studies show moderate drinking among university students. A study of 13 medical schools in England, Scotland, and Wales found that 86% of students consumed alcohol on a regular basis. Of these 82% were within the recommended limit for sensible drinking (Howse & Ghodse, 1997). Another study of helping-profession students showed, however, that about 50% of university students consumed over the recommended amount. Men consumed 26.7 drinks per week compared to 17.3 for women (Engs & Teijlingen, 1997).

Two reports by Engs (1980, 1982) of 1,691 helping-profession university students in Australia showed that males consumed a mean of about two drinks per day, whereas females consumed less than a drink per day. Among all students, 26.3% drank at least once a week. Most students (67.6%) appeared to be "light to moderate drinkers" (less than 40 g of alcohol, or four drinks per day). A later Australian study suggested that 37% of 18-year-old (legal age to drink) males and 18% of females had consumed six or more drinks per week. About 77% of males and 56% of females aged 18 had consumed alcohol during the proceeding week (Wilks, 1992b).

Drinking among Polish university students, in the Eastern European drinking culture, showed dramatic differences when compared with students from the U.S. In a study of 1,408 Polish and 3,375 American university students, significantly more drinks per week were consumed by Polish male (24.9) and female (15.2) students compared to U.S. male (15.0) and female (7.6) university students. U.S. and Polish students both consumed about 7.4 beers per week. However, significantly more wine was consumed by Polish (8.7 drinks) compared to U.S. (0.8 drinks) students. The authors concluded that the unexpectedly high consumption of wine, a nontraditional Polish drink, may have been due to the students' attempts to reinforce upper class and elite values of university students in Poland (Engs, Slawinska, & Hanson, 1991).

SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS OF DRINKING: IS CURRENT THINKING CONTRIBUTING TO PROBLEMS RATHER THAN SOLUTIONS?

Most of the research concerning drinking reflects the Northern culture's focus on "serious problems of youthful drinking." Indeed, most studies on alcohol problems among adolescents have been carried out in Northern Europe or the U.S. (Clark & Hilton, 1991). Does the negative focus on drinking problems, and, in particular, youthful problems exacerbate problematic drinking patterns?

Are Media Perceptions of Dramatic Increases in Alcohol Use Correct?

Over the course of the last 20 years, and, in particular, during the last decade of the 20th century, the news media have focused on reports of increased "binge" drinking among college students, particularly in the U.S. In Great Britain, there is also concern about problematic drinking among youth. In Italy, drunkenness at discos is on the rise. Could news items about wild youth consuming more beer and spirits have led to misconceptions about actual alcohol consumption levels and patterns among youth? When the research literature is examined, the results suggest that most college and university students do not as a rule routinely drink to intoxication, and that there has been a decrease in alcohol consumption overall since the 1980s in most cultures.

From 60% to 80% of college and university students in the U.S. are light to moderate drinkers (Engs et aI., 1996; Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport, & Castillo, 1995). It should be borne in mind that studies are generally presented in the negative, i.e., from 20% to 40% are heavy or "binge" drinkers in this instance. In the U.S., among 12,000 university students across the nation, 61 % of males and 81 % of females were found to consume alcohol within the limits for sensible drinking or moderate drinking (Engs et al., 1996). A recent study found that among students from the same universities there had be no change in the percentage of heavy or "binge" drinkers over a 12-year period, which remained at about 20% in each of the five time periods sampled (Engs & Hanson, 1999). The misrepresentation by the media in terms of drinking patterns raises some questions for research concerning the effect of focusing on negative patterns as opposed to more moderate drinking behaviors.

Emerging Research Questions II

- Does the focus on negative aspects of alcohol use among college students increase negative behaviors?
- If the media were to focus on positive drinking situations and the characteristics of young adults who drink in nonproblematic ways would more positive drinking patterns be exhibited?

Do Negative Expectations Increase Problems?

Drinking attitudes are related to expectations. There is much historical and cross-cultural evidence suggesting that people not only learn how to drink, but they also learn through the process of socialization how drinking will affect them (Heath, 1998; MacAndrew & Edgerton, 1969). Heath (1998) contends that "those who expect [drink] to make them feel sexy become amorous; those who view it as disinhibiting are demonstrative" (p. 115).

In Southern European cultures, such as Italy, Spain, and much of France, and blended cultures such as Austria, the United Kingdom, and the Bavarian region of Germany, individuals who consume wine with meals are not expected to become intoxicated, get into fights, and exhibit other problematic behaviors. Wine is treated as a food. On the other hand, young Italians who consume spirits and beer tend to exhibit more Northern episodic patterns (Cottino, 1995; Donato et al., 1995). Perhaps expectations of drunkenness, based upon media reports of youthful behaviors in North America, the United Kingdom, or Scandinavian cultures when consuming spirits or beer, encourage a similar expectation of drinking to intoxication when Southern European young people consume these beverages.

In the early 1990s some researchers and the media began to use the term "binge drinking" for heavier bouts of drinking. This term has emotional connotations and conjures up an image of the rapid consumption of alcohol for the exclusive purpose of getting drunk. As discussed previously, some young people in all cultures do engage in this type of behavior. However, since "binge drinking" is often defined as five or more drinks in anyone sitting, not all young people, or even adults, who drink this amount may be consuming in a rapid manner or even become intoxicated. It is not unknown for adults in many countries to consume this amount during the course of an extended dinner; five drinks consumed over 5 or 6 hours would result in a near-O blood alcohol level at the end of the evening. Most research reports from before the 1990s define five or more drinks as "heavy" or "riskier" drinking-terms that are neutral in emotional content.

Could the focus on negative drinking behaviors and the use of an emotionally laden term, rather than a more neutral word, to describe youthful drinking actually have increased problematic drinking behavior among youth? Recent research suggests a relationship between the perception of drinking and other behaviors, and the individual's own behavior. Students consistently overestimated both the amount of alcohol other students routinely consumed and the proportion of their fellow students who were heavy drinkers (Evans, Gilpin, Farkas, Shenassa, & Pierce, 1995; Perkins & Berkowitz, 1986).

The hypothesis that a change in expectations and perception could change behavior was recently tested by Haines and Spear (1996) at one university. They found that "a media campaign designed to change student perception of the amount of binge drinking showed an 18.5% drop in the number of students

who perceived binge drinking as the norm (from 69.7% to 51.2%) and a corresponding reduction in self-reported binge drinking of 8.8% (from 43.0% to 34.2%)" (Haines & Spear, 1996, p. 134). The program informed students of the actual percentage though skits, fliers, and other activities. Traditional education programs had little effect.

Emerging Research Questions III

- Do emotionally laden words such as "binge" precipitate high-risk drinking behaviors among youth as they perceive this to be the norm? Would more neutral words such as "heavy" or "unsafe" be less likely to do this?
- If university students were allowed to drink in supervised environments, such as campus pubs and restaurants, with the expectation of exhibiting responsible behaviors and immediate sanctions for irresponsible behavior, what would be the effect on their drinking behaviors?

Reactance and Control of Consumption Theories: Do Restrictive Alcohol Control Policies Create a Backlash?

Current alcohol public policy efforts in the U.S. are predominantly geared toward curbing drunk driving and illegal drinking. To date, these public policies have included severe penalties against drunk driving, lowering of legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to designate impaired driving in many states, a 21-year old lower age limit for alcohol purchase laws, government-sponsored abstinence education in schools and colleges, and warning labels on alcohol beverages. These alcohol policy measures have had only a temporary effect on some of the social problems they were attempting to eliminate. It is possible that they may also have increased other problems.

Among university students an increase in social, personal, and health problems related to drinking began to occur after the mandatory 21-year-old purchase law was implemented in the U.S. in 1987. Yet, as previously discussed, the data show no increase in frequency or quantity of drinking-or even heavy "binge" drinking (five or more drinks per occasion)-among university students since 1980, when per capita consumption reached a peak. In addition, fatal motor vehicle crashes began to decline before implementation of the 21-year-old purchase policy on a national level (Engs & Hanson, 1989, 1994, 1999). Could the increase in some behaviors related to drinking, while per capita consumption was decreasing, be explained by reactance theory and the lack of support for the "control of consumption" theory?

Reactance Theory Reactance theory suggests that telling persons not to do something often produces the opposite reaction. People value their sense of freedom and autonomy and like to perceive themselves as being in control.

According to the theory suggests that whenever people believe that their freedom either has been or will be unjustly threatened, they enter into a reactance motivational state and act to regain control by not complying. Coercion, in particular, leads to the arousal of reactance, which in turn tends to reduce compliance (Barnes & Welte, 1983; Brehem, 1972).

Since 1987, several reports have suggested that reactance may be occurring in drinkers under the age of 21 in the U.S. (Allen, Sprenkel, & Vitale, 1994; Engs & Hanson, 1989). A study by Engs and Hanson (1989) to test this theory in over 3,000 university college students found that, after the national 21-year old purchase age policy had been implemented, a significantly lower percentage of legal age students consumed over five drinks per sitting per week (15.4%) compared to those who were under 21 years of age (24.1 %). A more recent survey with more than 12,000 students from across the nation still showed that a lower percentage (18.6%) of legal age students consumed five drinks or more compared to students under 21 (22.1 %) (Engs et al., 1996). In contrast, the results of two previous surveys, at the same universities, had found few significant differences in problems related to drinking before the drinking laws changed. After the change in the law, younger students began to drink in underground situations away from adult monitoring (Engs & Hanson, 1986, 1988).

As noted above, U.S. university students consumed a greater amount of alcohol and exhibited more problems related to drinking than Canadian students. The major difference between the two countries was that the legal purchase age in Ontario was 19 years while in the states contingent to the Great Lakes it was 21. It is hypothesized that the higher consumption levels and problems might be the result of reactance (Engs et al., 1990).

Some could argue that decreased drinking among legal age students was due to maturation. However, in some countries where it is legal for young adolescents to consume alcohol it is the older students who consume the most and exhibit more drinking-related problems. For example, in Scotland, where it is legal to drink at age 18, a study in over 3,000 university students found that the mean amount of alcohol consumed by both males and females increased as they grew older. The 19- to 24-year-old drinkers consumed the largest amount of alcohol. After age 24, consumption decreased (Engs & TeijIingen, 1997).

Reduction- (or Control-) of-Consumption Theory Beyond reactance theory, increases in negative behaviors related to drinking also suggest that the "reduction-of-consumption model" may be ineffective, and even counterproductive. This model suggests that regulating and limiting the supply of alcohol determines the extent to which it will be consumed; if less is consumed, fewer drinking-related problems will result. Therefore, measures such as higher taxes, raising the age of consumption, decreasing advertisements, limiting the number of sales outlets and hours of purchase, and placing warning messages on alcoholic beverages should decrease drinking and alcohol problems (Schmidt, 1985; Single, 1988). However, it appears from recent research that public poli-

cies, such as the minimum age 21 purchase law to control consumption among youthful drinkers, may have actually produced a backlash in the form of some negative behaviors related to drinking among youth.

In the U.S., a recent study tested the control-of-consumption theory. A sample of students from the same universities were sampled five times over a 12-year period (Engs & Hanson, 1999). The results showed a significant increase in the percentage of abstainers and a significant decrease in the mean number of drinks per week consumed since 1980. There was a significant decrease in variables related to drinking and driving. However, a significant increase in many problems related to drinking after, but not before, 1987 was found. It was concluded that the reduction-of-consumption hypothesis was supported only by the drinking and driving variables. This decrease in drinking and driving fatalities is often used to back current control-of-consumption polices and has been discussed in numerous reports. However, support for this argument does not take into account the increased health, school, legal, and social problems related to alcohol consumption among youth that has occurred since the implementation of the 2l-year minimum age purchase policy. Reactance motivation and the potential ineffectiveness of the control-of-consumption model in countering many negative behaviors related to alcohol consumption need to be further explored.

Emerging Research Questions IV

- Does the control-of-consumption model lead to reactance motivation and backlash behaviors?
- In the U.S., would reducing the legal purchase and drinking age in controlled situations such as restaurants and taverns promote positive drinking?

School-Based Abstinence Education and Zero Tolerance Public Policy: Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?

School-based alcohol education programs in the U.S. reflect the ingrained Northern drinking culture's ambivalence and negative attitudes towards alcohol. In 1989, the Federal Government's Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (aSAP) mandated abstinence as the only message to be taught in public schools (aSAP, 1989). Safe, responsible, sensible, or "low-risk" drinking could not be presented by schools or teachers who received funding from this program. Other programs had goals of decreasing harm, but rarely promoting positive drinking behaviors for those consuming alcohol even if a high proportion of "underage" youth were consuming alcohol illegally (Engs, 1981, 1991; Haines & Spear, 1996; Hanson, 1996).

Public policies on "zero" tolerance and negative messages regarding drinking have resulted in otherwise law-abiding young people acquiring police records. In general, zero tolerance may cause increased ambivalence about alcohol. More positive educational approaches have also primarily focused on messages de-

signed to prevent alcohol consumption and reduce harm. Few have discussed sensible ways of consuming different alcoholic beverages, taught how to use alcohol as a adjunct to a party rather than its focus, or suggested what beverage tastes best with different foods. However, even school-based programs that have been more positive in their approaches have met with only marginal successes in promoting more responsible drinking behaviors (Fors, 1990; Hanson, 1996; Milgram, 1996).

Drinking among youth in many cultures is considered a recreational activity. As in other recreational activities, such as bicycle racing, football, sky-diving, or mountaineering, there are various steps that can be taken to reduce risk and increase safety. Examination of drinking-related risks, as a factor in this recreational pastime, can put drinking in a different light in terms of education, prevention, and research. In general, the greater amount of alcohol consumed, the greater the risk. However, other factors such as the age of the drinker need to be kept in mind in designing prevention strategies or research concerning learning about drinking (Roche & Evans, 1998).

A sample research proposal for U.S. colleges and universities

It is time to try and test new ideas. Some Colorado university administrators and politicians have discussed the possibility of selling licenses to drink a low alcohol beer, in certain establishments, to students under 21 years of age. This is an innovative idea that could easily be implemented and studied on the college campus today.

Although the state might lose federal highway funding if this type of program were carried out under present law, the deficit could be eliminated through the license fee. (Ideally, instead of a state being punished for an innovative experiment by taking away highway funding, it should be rewarded for attempting to promote more positive behaviors.)

SUMMARY

The range of attitudes and behaviors concerning drinking in the Western world have deep roots in ancient cultures. Cultural attitudes and beliefs are also influenced by religion and social reform and temperance cycles. There have been some changes in drinking preferences and practices among Western youth. However, deep cultural differences still remain between Northern and Southern European cultures and their attitudes towards alcohol. Values concerning drinking are transmitted by the family. However, a culture's perception of drinking, expectations in regard to alcohol consumption, reactance motivation, and even restrictive control-of-consumption policies may be associated with more problematic drinking among youth. Creative and imaginative research on learning about drinking in a positive manner as presented in this chapter needs to be conducted.

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